

Mermaids: The Body Found was a 2012 [Found Footage Mockumentary](#) by [Animal Planet](#) about a group of scientists trying to uncover a [Government Conspiracy](#) to hide their research into an underwater sonic weapon, and to hide the existence of mermaids, which would have ended the testing prematurely had their existence been revealed.

It was made after [Animal Planet](#)'s previous mockumentary [Dragons: A Fantasy Made Real](#) and was followed up by *Mermaids: The New Evidence* in May 2013 and several mockumentaries including [Discovery Channel](#)'s [Megalodon: The Monster Shark Lives](#) which are often considered as [Spiritual Successors](#).

This film provides examples of:

- [Artistic License – Biology](#):
 - The explanation of how (and why) a tailless hominid re-evolves a tail in order to create the standard mermaid bodyplan never appears: one section shows a standard hominid bodyplan, the next is a mermaid. It's also noticeable that the head and face remain human(ish) and do not streamline. It seems implied that the hominids' legs fuse into a tail-like structure, as the flukes are shown to contain bones, presumably developed from the original foot bones, an incident that has never been known to happen in existing aquatic mammals, which is discussed by the interviewees. One scientist's reaction to bones in the flukes was, according to him, "WTF? This is unprecedented!"
 - Also, the mermaids' evolution seems to have happened much too fast to be believable. The terrestrial ancestors of whales took nearly 10 million years to become fully aquatic, but the mermaids are shown doing this in less than 2 million years.
- [Artistic License – Paleontology](#): The film justifies human brutality to mermaids by stating that modern humans wiped Neanderthals out to show how bad we are at coexistence. In reality there is plenty of evidence for both species coexisting for millenia, trading, and even interbreeding with it being thought a combination of climate change and population fragmentation is to blame for the latter's extinction.
- [Government Conspiracy](#): For reasons beyond the main cast's knowledge, the U.S. Navy goes to great lengths to cover up the existence of merfolk. Possibly to continue the research into sonic weaponry, or possibly to continue tests on the merfolk themselves.
- [Gratuitous Foreign Language](#): One of the 'witnesses' interviewed in the video is a fisherman who speaks in what sounds like a mix of German and Nordic dialects.
- [Heroic Sacrifice](#): A sentinel merman leads a hungry *megalodon* away from the rest of his group by cutting himself to get its attention.
- [Humans Are the Real Monsters](#): The film goes to great lengths to draw a contrast between the gentle merfolk who coexist peacefully with whales and dolphins, and the monstrous humans who will gladly tolerate the collateral deaths of unknown numbers of them in the name of weapons research, and will even go out of their way to cover up the very *existence* of mermaids so that they can continue said weapons research without worrying about potential [human\(?\)](#) rights violations. It also implies that paleo-art shown

in the film is evidence that primitive humans were also aggressors towards the merfolk.

Dr. Webster: We (humans) aren't so good at co-existence.^{note}

- [Jitter Cam](#): The footage from the kids' camera phone.
- [Jump Scare](#):
 - The cell phone video near the end features the seemingly-dead mermaid sitting up and screeching at one of the kids checking its "corpse".
 - Also another video where a camera focuses in on a porthole on a holding tank and a webbed hand suddenly appears, startling the person filming it.
- [Our Mermaids Are Different](#): The show carefully makes the evolution of hominids into aquatic creatures a plausible concept, using biological possibilities to pose an evolutionary "what if?" scenario, using the [Aquatic Ape hypothesis](#) .
- [Mockumentary](#): Despite the creators saying that the film was made for entertainment (and the CG beach mermaid), many people believed that the portrayed events are real. The film however did little to make that apparent aside from a blink-and-you-miss it disclaimer during the credits.
- [Not Using the "Z" Word](#): A variant. It took the scientists a while, perhaps months, before they could say what they were thinking: "mermaids".
- [Speculative Biology](#): Speculates what mermaids would be like if they were real.
- [Stealth Mentor](#): Even more subtly than [Lost Tapes](#). For examples, the documentary notes that Navy sonar tests have been directly implicated in whale beachings, and "The Bloop" is a real phenomenon, though no one knows what it is (although it's currently thought to be the sound of an "icequake").
- [Super-Persistent Predator](#): While it doesn't go to crazy extremes to get food, the second *Megalodon* chases after the pod of merfolk, completely ignoring a fresh whale kill in favor of some tiny aquatic hominids. This would be the equivalent of a human rejecting a chicken dinner and going out of its way for a few crackers.
- [Technology Marches On](#): Invoked by the fact that the Navy didn't confiscate a kid's cell phone, not knowing it had the very new video recording feature at the time.
- [Threatening Shark](#): *Megalodon*, a gigantic prehistoric species of shark, appears in a short segment where some hunt a whale and a merman is forced to make an [Heroic Sacrifice](#) to keep the predators away from his pod.
- [Wham Line](#): "Not flippers. Not fins. *Hands*."